

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 181588

FOLLOWING REPEAT KINSHASA 7369 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BUKAVU
LUBUMBASHI GENEVA BRUSSELS KIGALI JULY 15.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 7369

AIDAC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:
SUBJECT: CHOLERA - ZAIRE

REFS: (A) BUKAVU 0062, (B) KINSHASA 7257, (C) STATE 177017

1. CHOLERA IN THE KIVA AREA OF ZAIRE STARTED IN THE UVIRA AREA IN
MID-MAY OF 1978 AND BY JUNE 26 THERE WERE 483 CASES (462 BACTERIOLO-
GICALLY CONFIRMED) AND 59 DEATHS IN THE UVIRA AREA. BY EARLY JUNE
THE EPIDEMIC HAD SPREAD SOUTHERLY ALONG THE WESTERN SHORE OF
LAKE TANGANYIKA TO FIZI AND KALEMIE WITH AN ESTIMATED 350-400
DEATHS IN VILLAGES IN THIS AREA. KALEMIE HAD AN ESTIMATED
300-400 CASES (216 CONFIRMED BACTERIOLOGICALLY) WITH ABOUT 100
DEATHS. THERE IS NO INFORMATION THAT THE DISEASE HAS SPREAD TO
OTHER NORTH SHABAN TOWNS. THE EPIDEMIC IN UVIRA AND KALEMIE
PEAKED IN MID-JUNE AND THEN DECREASED. CURRENT ON-SITE REPORTS
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INDICATE THAT KALEMIE HAS FEW NEW CASES AND THE SITUATION IS
UNDER CONTROL. TWO OR THREE CASES PER DAY ARE OCCURRING AT
UVIRA BUT THE EPIDEMIC IS STABLE THERE. FOLLOWING THE
OCCURRENCE OF SEVERAL SUSPECTED CASES IN BUKAVU IN MID-JUNE
CHOLERA WAS FIRST DIAGNOSED THERE ON JUNE 27 AND TO DATE THERE
HAVE BEEN 104 CASES AND 13 DEATHS AT BUKAVU. BELGIAN
BACTERIOLOGIST FROM INSTITUTE TROPICAL MEDICINE ANVERS CON-

FIRMED POSITIVE CHOLERA VIBRIO ON 12 OF 12 CASES.

3. A NATIONAL COMMISSION WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE GOZ ON JUNE 20, 1978 UNDER MINISTER OF HEALTH, INCLUDING WHO REPRESENTATION. DESPITE RECOMMENDATION THAT IT COORDINATE ALL CHOLERA CONTROL MEASURES INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL ASSISTANCE, THE COMMISSION HAS BEEN ALMOST COMPLETELY INEFFECTIVE TO DATE. CONTROL AND RELIEF MEASURES HAVE BEEN CARRIED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL MAINLY THROUGH BELGIAN EXPATRIATE ASSISTANCE IN COORDINATION WITH LOCAL GOZ AUTHORITIES. WHO HAS NOT PLAYED ANY SUBSTANTIAL ROLE IN COORDINATING CONTROL MEASURES.

3. EXTENSION OF CHOLERA TO BUKAVU, A CITY OF 150,000 POPULATION, AND POTENTIAL SPREAD TO THE DENSELY POPULATED AREAS TO THE NORTH POSES A THREAT OF EXTENSION TO KISANGANI AND BY RIVER TRAFFIC TO WESTERN ZAIRE. PRESENT SITUATION IN BUKAVU IS NOT IMMEDIATELY CRITICAL AND IN NO WAY COULD BE CONSIDERED AS A DISASTER. A REASONABLY GOOD LOCAL ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN SET UP BUT THE LACK OF A NATIONAL LEVEL RESPONSE OR COORDINATING MECHANISM IS DISTURBING.

4. MISSION IN COLLABORATION WITH BELGIANS HAS BEEN URGING ESTABLISHMENT OF EFFECTIVE NATIONAL LEVEL CONTROL/COORDINATION MECHANISM.

ON JULY 14, GOZ SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (IN ABSENCE OF MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, WHO IS IN EUROPE) DECIDED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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ESTABLISH A NEW NATIONAL COMMISSION UNDER MORE EFFECTIVE ZAIRIAN LEADERSHIP AND WITH STRONG COORDINATING ROLE FOR WHO. ISSUES OF REQUEST FOR A WHO CHOLERA CONSULTANT, COORDINATED PLANS FOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM, CONTROL MEASURES, AND MATERIAL NEEDS WILL ALL BE ADDRESSED AT FIRST MEETING OF NEW COMMISSION EXPECTED TO CONVENE EARLY NEXT WEEK. INFORM REQUEST FOR MATERIALS BY LOCAL COMMITTEE AT BUKAVU (REPORTED BY AMCONSUL BUKAVU, REF A) WILL BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF THESE DELIBERATIONS. WE WILL FOLLOW CAREFULLY AND REPORT DEVELOPMENTS. CUTLER
UNQUOTE CHRISHOPHER

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